



DICKINSON  WRIGHT

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22

*Annual Diversity, Equity  
and Inclusion Report*

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# A Message from Mike Hammer, Dickinson Wright CEO

Welcome to Dickinson Wright's 2022 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Annual Report. Our core values as a firm are what propel our longstanding commitment to DEI, and we are proud of our history of uplifting diverse lawyers and developing a firm culture that lives up to the highest ideals of our profession. For us, diversity is both a critically important strategic priority and a moral imperative that we take seriously inside and outside of our offices.



These same core values of hard work and inclusion are also at the heart of our resiliency as a firm. Despite continued worldwide uncertainty as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, Dickinson Wright achieved many of the goals outlined in our Diversity Action Plan, set ambitious new DEI targets that are driven by innovative internal initiatives and external partnerships, and deepened our relationships with our clients and communities through our impressive diversity programming.

The key to our DEI success at Dickinson Wright is our willingness to “get in the trenches” with each other—to do the hard work of hearing, understanding, and supporting each other on an individual basis. That is what makes our firm culture unique: it is about unity, and it is about all of us.

I invite you to read through the following pages of this report to learn more about how Dickinson Wright is moving forward together to create the best and most inclusive organization possible. We hope you enjoy it, and we look forward to continuing this journey together.

# A Message from Aaron Burrell & Kathy Zelenock, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Co-Chairs

Social unrest in cities across America following horrifying racist and religion-based incidents, coupled with the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision, and the gradual wind-down and aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, resurfaced concern for and action against longstanding inequities in nearly every corner of society. Dickinson Wright seized this national inflection point to continue to expand diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, both within the firm, and in outreach to many of the communities where our offices are located.

As will be highlighted in these pages, our internal initiatives truly blossomed in 2022, and we invested heavily in new external partnerships that expanded our firm's reach in recruiting, retention, training, and advancement. We also bolstered efforts in pro bono and community outreach. We connected our attorneys and staff through book clubs and sponsorship programs, refined longstanding diversity initiatives such as our Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service programming, and expanded our participation in key affinity bar association across our office footprint. We worked to assure that our outstanding attorneys received the support that they need to be successful, while also helping them to pursue recognition individually and as a firm for contributions to diverse communities.

As the leaders of Dickinson Wright's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, we are proud of the progress we made in 2022, especially in light of the enormous challenges facing the legal industry, the business clients that we serve, and society as whole. We are also grateful for the relentless support we have received from firm leadership, members of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and our colleagues from across the firm. We look forward to continued success in 2023!



# MEET THE DEI COMMITTEE

Dickinson Wright's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEIC) represents the best of the firm: a coalition of dedicated and influential attorneys hailing from all corners of our national footprint who devote countless hours to advancing DEI in the firm and in our communities.

DEIC membership includes:

- Equity and non-equity partners, associates and staff;
- The firm's Chairman, and;
- Three members of the Management Group.

The DEIC's recommendations, guidance, and on-the-ground work is critical to achieving the goals outlined in the firm's 32-Point Diversity Action Plan.



**Aaron V. Burrell**

*Member and Diversity, Equity  
and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair*



**Katheryne L. Zelenock**

*Member and Diversity, Equity  
and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair*



**Jake R. McMillian**

*Director of Diversity, Equity  
and Inclusion*



**Cynthia L. Alexander**  
Member | Las Vegas, Troy



**Andrew J. Alvarado**  
Associate | Austin



**Robert L. Avers**  
Member | Ann Arbor, Lansing



**Tracy Bergeron Lucha**  
Partner | Toronto



**Joshua L. Burgener**  
Member | Nashville



**Flavia Campbell**  
Member | Phoenix



**J. Benjamin Dolan**  
Member | Troy



**Melissa B. Eisen**  
Director, Professional  
Resources & Development |  
Toronto



**Patrick B. Green**  
Member | Detroit



**Jill S. Ingber**  
Director of Recruitment  
& Associate Development  
| Troy



**John L. Krieger**  
Member | Las Vegas



**Kathy Le**  
Partner | Toronto



**Leslee M. Lewis**

Member | Grand Rapids



**James A. Martone**

Member | Troy



**Jomy J. Methipara**

Member | Washington D.C.



**Mahesh K. Nayak**

Member | Troy



**Lloyd Pierre-Louis**

Member | Columbus



**James A. Plemmons**

Member | Detroit



**Linda M. Reyna**

Vice President of Human  
Resources | Detroit



**M. Katherine VanderVeen**

Member | Detroit



**Sharaé L. Williams**

Associate | Ann Arbor



**Kathryn S. Wood**

Member | Troy

At Dickinson Wright, our success is driven by our people. Throughout the 2022 calendar year, the firm continued its focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting the brightest and most diverse attorney talent.

## Our Diversity Breakdown

*As of 12/31/22*

**37%**

*All Attorneys*

**30%**

*Members*

**60%**

*Associates*

**81%**

*2022 Summer Associates*

**43%**

*2022 Elevated Partners*





# ***Firm Life Program***

Dickinson Wright's signature *Firm Life* series expanded across the country in 2022. This innovative recruiting and mentorship program connects lawyers from Dickinson Wright's affinity groups to diverse law students across our national footprint in a low-stakes, informational discussion about success in law school, diversity in the profession, and the various paths to big firm practice. The DEIC looks forward to continuing to expand the *Firm Life* program in 2023!

*Firm Life: Detroit*, connected members of Dickinson Wright's Black/African American Affinity Group to student members of Michigan-area Black Law Students Associations (BLSA).

*Firm Life: Texas* invited Hispanic, Latinx, and Chicana student groups from six Texas law schools to participate.

*Firm Life: DC* invited all diverse student groups from D.C.-area law schools to participate.

**“One of our objectives is to raise our firm’s profile among law students that, for whatever reason, don’t have us top of mind,”** said Patrick Green, Detroit Member and Chair of the firm’s Recruitment Committee. **“Our *Firm Life* program does just that while also giving students a better understanding of what it’s like—and what it takes—to work in a large firm like ours.”**

Austin Associate Andrew Alvarado, who led the *Firm Life: Texas* program noted that the new programs are already showing results.

**“So many of the students I interviewed during OCI mentioned that *Firm Life: Texas* put Dickinson Wright on their radar. Students were genuinely excited to interview with us based on that program alone.”**

# Tapping Diverse Talent through External Partnerships

In 2022, Dickinson Wright significantly increased its participation in external initiatives with premier DEI organizations in the legal industry and in the markets where we do business.

## Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)

Dickinson Wright is a member of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD), joining more than 400 corporate legal departments and law firms across the country united in the goal to increase diversity at all levels of the profession. LCLD coordinates a suite of action programs that help promote diversity within legal organizations, increase diverse representation and influence in all areas of the profession, and create an equitable legal industry where all attorneys have access to opportunities and advancement.

Included among these programs are LCLD Fellows, LCLD Pathfinders, and LCLD 1L Scholars, all three of which DW participates annually.

In October 2022, DW received LCLD's *Compass Award* for our extraordinary participation in LCLD programming.



## Wolverine Bar Association

DW has long been a supporter of and participant in the Wolverine Bar 1L Summer Clerkship Program. The Summer Clerkship Program places first-year, minority law students in clerkship positions within law firms and corporations that will provide opportunities to establish a network of contacts, develop practice skills, and acquire other benefits. Dickinson Wright participates in the Summer Clerkship Program in 2022, and also annually hosts a reception before the Wolverine Bar Association Barrister's Ball.



## Phoenix Diversity Legal Writing Program

The firm also added a new local pipeline program to its repertoire by joining the Phoenix Diversity Legal Writing Program (DLWP).

A collaborative scholarship and training program between the Maricopa County Bar Association, the State Bar of Arizona, and Phoenix law firms, the DLWP identifies diverse 2Ls and 3Ls from the University of Arizona and Arizona State University Law Schools and provides them with an immersive, 12-week internship focused on core legal research and writing skills needed for a successful early legal practice.



# DEI Book Clubs

In 2022, Dickinson Wright launched a Diversity Book Club Series. Held quarterly, each book club featured multiple book offerings discussing a broader diversity theme.

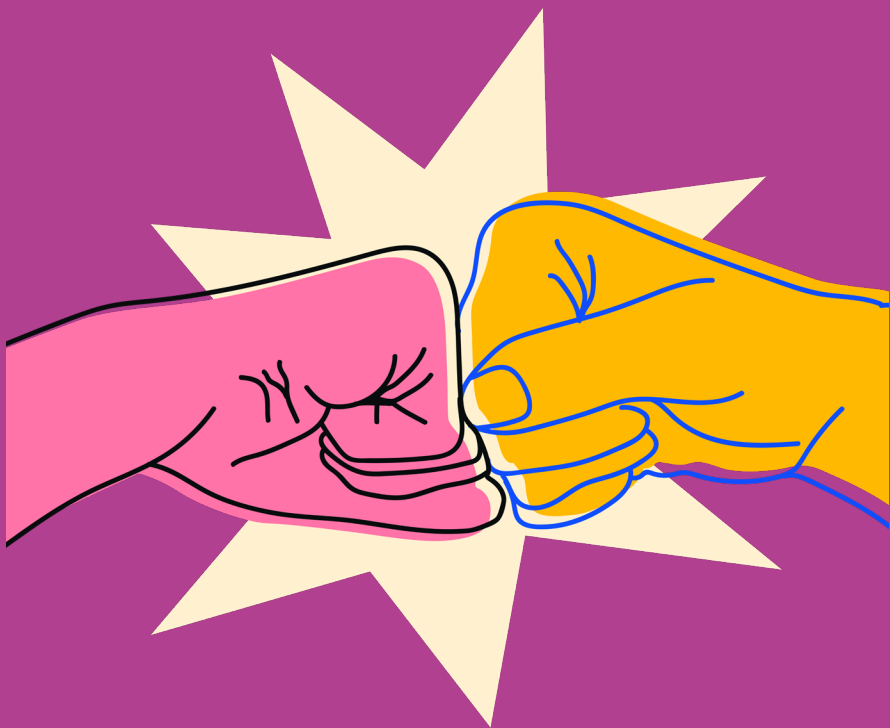
The book clubs are widely popular across the firm, with nearly 250 attorneys and staff requesting a book for each series. The book clubs are designed to provide opportunities for our colleagues to openly discuss knotty issues of race, identity, culture, and mental health.

**“In DEI work, our greatest hope is that our programs are engaging, educational, and impactful,”** said Jake McMillian, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. **“I can’t think of any other program that simultaneously includes every person at the firm, gives people an opportunity to learn about someone else’s experience at their own pace and in the comfort of their own homes, and is meaningful enough that people will participate every time.”**



# 2022 Book Club Selections

- Just Mercy
- How the Word is Passed
- On Juneteenth
- Tomorrow Will be Different
- Maybe You Should Talk to Someone
- The Happy Lawyer
- The Year of Magical Thinking
- The Education of Augie Merasty
- Disability Visibility



# Affinity Groups

Dickinson Wright is creating a law firm community where all of our people feel seen and represented. Our affinity groups also create spaces where our women and diverse attorneys can have candid conversations about success strategies and career advancement. These groups help us celebrate the unique qualities each of our attorneys and staff bring to the firm.

**"The Women's Network is an essential resource for women attorneys of all levels. This group routinely provides roadmaps to success, individual mentorship, and community building that is vital to DW's success."**

## ***Women's Network* | Kathy Zelenock**



**"It's great to see the firm taking an active role in listening to our concerns, providing resources to support our shared goals of recruiting and retaining more diverse attorneys, and increasing DW's name recognition across North America."**



## ***Hispanic/Latinx* | Andrew Alvarado**



**"Looking forward, I hope the Parents Affinity Group can encourage and support our lawyers in navigating parenthood and lawyering. No one should feel alone trying to figure out this important personal and professional milestone."**

***Parents* | Holly Zoe**



**"The Black/African American Attorney Affinity Group expands our members' sense of firm community, and enhances each member's long-term practice development. Our members benefit every day from the Affinity Group's internal mentorship and external sponsorship opportunities."**



***Black/African American* | Lloyd Pierre-Louis**

"I was thrilled to help launch the LGBTQ+ Affinity group this year, adding to Dickinson Wright's stellar internal networks for diverse lawyers. This Affinity Group reinforces our firm culture where everyone is empowered to be themselves at work and achieve a fruitful legal practice."



**LGBTQ+ | John Krieger**

"The Asian Pacific Islander Affinity Group is a great place for API attorneys from across our firm to meet each other, mentor each other, and share business. Our firm is growing, and our affinity groups are key to staying connected."



***Asian Pacific Islander* | Kathy Le**

# 2022 Champion of Diversity Award



Chairman Emeritus Dennis Archer (Member, Detroit) was selected to receive **Dickinson Wright's 2022 Champion of Diversity Award**. This annual award is granted by the Firm's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee (DEIC) for extraordinary contributions to and transformative leadership in diversity initiatives inside and outside the Firm. Capping an illustrious career that spans five decades, including three decades with Dickinson Wright, Archer's selection comes as the result of unrivaled leadership, mentorship, and service to the Firm, the legal profession, and throughout Greater Detroit.

Archer first joined Dickinson Wright in 1991 as a member of the litigation practice group. Immediately prior to joining the firm, Archer had served as a Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, appointed by Governor James Blanchard. He subsequently served two terms as Mayor of Detroit, focusing much of his energy on developing business relationships between the City of Detroit and its surrounding suburbs, as well as attracting new business sectors to the city.

During his career, Archer was elected the President of the State Bar of Michigan, the Detroit Bar Association, the Wolverine Bar Association, and the National Bar Association. He was also the first African American



President of the American Bar Association, which had prohibited Black lawyers from membership until 1943. From this latter group, Archer received the ABA Medal—the Association’s highest honor—in 2016, joining an exceptionally selective group of honorees that includes multiple United States Supreme Court Justices, Secretaries of State, and civil rights activists.

“Dennis Archer is a force of nature in both his public service life and in his private sector career,” said CEO and Ann Arbor Member Mike Hammer. “His contributions to the bench and bar are self-evident, but he has also been a shining example for so many of our attorneys and an unflinching advocate for diversity and inclusion within our ranks.”

Archer returned to Dickinson Wright in 2002 after being elected Chairman of the Firm. During his eight years as Chairman, Archer mentored countless attorneys, especially up-and-coming diverse attorneys, and raised the Firm’s profile across the country. Even today, Archer still participates in mentoring and outreach efforts for diverse attorneys and law students, cementing Dickinson Wright’s reputation as a premier firm for diverse lawyer success.

In December 2022, Archer officially entered retirement, concluding a career of unparalleled excellence. Archer’s visionary leadership in the legal profession and various business and political posts, outstanding mentorship of his colleagues, and many works to advance the cause of diversity, equity and inclusion will be sorely missed, but his legacy will remain long after his departure.

# MLK Service Day

In January, Dickinson Wright hosted our 8th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service projects across our national footprint. Attorneys and staff from all of our 19 offices participated in service projects with area non-profits that directly benefit the communities where we do business. Service projects included food repacking at the Gleaners Food Bank in metropolitan Detroit and the Chicago Food Depository, a volunteer morning with Noah's Animal House in Las Vegas, and meal service at Martha's Table in Washington, D.C. Volunteers at Martha's Table also received a surprise visitor this year, with Vice

President Kamala Harris and Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff joining the volunteer efforts. Many offices also hosted in-office collections, food drives, and other opportunities for attorneys and staff unable to participate in a live volunteer opportunity.



Additionally, the DEIC hosted a half-day of educational webinars and book clubs for the firm on the Friday preceding Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Our keynote speaker was Kimberly D'Haene, Assistant Dean of Student Services at the University of Michigan Law School. Dean D'Haene is an expert on professional responsibility and issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal profession.

## 2022 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Services Activities:

- Ann Arbor: In-Office Food Drive for Food Gatherers
- Austin: In-Office Food Drive for Central Texas Food Bank
- Chicago: Volunteered at Chicago Food Depository
- Columbus: Volunteered at LifeTown
- Detroit/Troy: Volunteered at Food Hub at the Mercado
- Grand Rapids: In-Office Drive for Help for the Homeless Near Us and One Warm Coat
- Las Vegas/Reno: In-Office Drive for Noah's Animal House
- Phoenix: Volunteered with Caring Coalition of Phoenix
- Saginaw: In-Office Drive for Heart of Saginaw
- Washington, D.C.: Volunteered at Martha's Table



Sharon Newlon (Member and Environmental, Energy & Sustainability Practice Group Co-Chair, Detroit) volunteered at Forgotten Harvest on Martin Luther King Day.



Katie VanderVeen (Member, Detroit) represented Dickinson Wright in Denver at the city's 37th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade. Katie marched alongside thousands of community members from the greater Denver area, including Denver Mayor Michael Hancock (right) and US Senator and former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper (left).

# Dickinson Wright Observes National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

Since its inception in Canada in 2021, Dickinson Wright has joined our Canadian colleagues, clients, and friends in observing the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a new federal statutory holiday intended to “recognize and commemorate the legacy of residential schools” in Canada. “Residential schools” were a network of boarding schools for Indigenous peoples in Canada, funded by Canada’s Department of Indian Affairs and administered by Christian churches. Existing for more than 100 years and mandatory for all Indigenous Canadian children between 1894 and 1947, residential schools were designed to isolate Indigenous children from their families, native culture, and religion, with an ultimate goal of assimilating the children into the dominant Canadian culture.



In honor of the inaugural observance in 2021, Dickinson Wright purchased an original piece of artwork from Indigenous Canadian artist Dana Claxton that is displayed in our Toronto office. This year, the DEIC chose *The Education of Augie Merasty* as one of its fall DEI Book Club selections. The autobiography, named “Book of the Year” upon its initial release in Canada, chronicles Merasty’s experience at St. Therese Residential School in Sturgeon Landing, Saskatchewan. The book club was led by Lori Mishibinijima, Professor of Indigenous & Reconciliation Initiatives Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto. We look forward to new opportunities for education and healing arising from our annual observance of the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation.



# Selection for University of Michigan Ross School of Business MAP Project



In January 2022, Dickinson Wright was selected to sponsor a **Multidisciplinary Action Project (MAP) at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business**. MAP is a semester-long field study program in which teams of Ross MBA students apply skills they have learned in their course of study to real-world business and organizational problems submitted by companies, NGOs, and other organizations from across the world.

Dickinson Wright's MAP focused specifically on developing new diversity marketing strategies to better tell our DEI story to clients, law students, prospective lateral hires, and internally. The MAP team submitted a final report that contained a comparative market analysis of our current marketing strategy relative to competitor firms, identified themes and industry examples of highly effective diversity-focused recruiting, integration, and social media materials, and included a multi-year DEI marketing strategy to be considered by the firm.



# Leaders to the Front: Diverse Attorneys take Key Roles in firm Leadership

Dickinson Wright believes that diverse teams of lawyers produce better results for our clients and for our firm. We actively recruit diverse lawyers to lead in key committees and practice groups. Our pipeline efforts extend beyond recruitment and retention: we focus on developing the firm's future.





**Flavia Campbell:** Flavia Campbell (Member, Phoenix) joined the firm in July 2020, bringing with her a wealth of experience in trademark, copyright, and intellectual property law. Having started her professional career in Brazil, Flavia also brings a unique perspective to global portfolio management. Given this breadth of experience, Flavia was tapped as Trademarks and Copyrights Practice Group Co-Chair in 2022.

**Mahesh Nayak:** Mahesh Nayak (Member, Troy) is a founder and Co-Chair of Dickinson Wright's International Law Practice Group. Working from offices located throughout key North American trade corridors as well as through affiliations with local firms in Europe, China, the ASEAN region, Japan, India, and South Korea, this Practice Group aids corporation from across the globe in a variety of transactions with a particular focus in the manufacturing and industrial sectors.



**John Krieger:** Members on the firm's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee are also regularly tapped for key positions on the firm's most influential committees. Member John Krieger (Las Vegas) sits on the DEIC and was also previously elected to one of the Income Member seats on the firm's Governing Board. In this role, Krieger helped ensure that the interests of the DEIC remained front and center in all key firm decisions.

# Suzanne Sukkar Selected for Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer appointed Member Suzanne Sukkar (Ann Arbor) as Chair of the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs. Sukkar, an attorney in the firm's immigration practice, was first appointed to the Commission in 2015 and has served under two Michigan governors. The 15-member Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the Governor and the Director of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, providing guidance and leadership on issues related to Arab and Chaldean communities in Michigan. The Commission is specifically charged with promoting economic opportunities for these communities, preventing discrimination, and raising awareness of Middle Eastern culture and history.



Sukkar's appointment to the Commission comes as the result of a remarkable track record of community service throughout her career. Prior to her appointment on the Commission, Sukkar served as President of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, Board Treasurer for American Arab Chamber of Commerce, and as a Fellow for both the Michigan Bar Foundation and American Bar Foundation. The latter designations are reserved for attorneys whose careers have "demonstrated outstanding dedication to the highest principles of the legal profession and to the welfare of their communities," and fellow membership is limited to 1% and 5% of attorneys in each respective jurisdiction.

# Kris Beecher Tapped for 2022 Law360 Native American Editorial Advisory Board



Phoenix Associate Kris Beecher was selected to serve on legal news service Law360's 2022 Native American Editorial Advisory Board. In this role, Beecher works with 11 other attorneys from across the country and the legal industry to shape coverage around Native American legal issues. Reaching more than two million readers per day, Law360 provides important legal analysis and updates facing companies, investors, organizations, law firms and lawyers in more than 60 legal practice areas. An enrolled member of the

Navajo Nation, Beecher maintains active bar admission with both the Hualapai Tribal Court and the Navajo Nation Bar Association. He also obtained a certificate in Indian Law from Arizona State University, which houses one of the top Indian Law programs in the United States.

While in law school, Beecher was selected to be a Commissioner and Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Navajo Housing Authority, the largest Indian housing authority in the country. In this role, Beecher oversaw a \$90 million Housing Authority budget and close to \$500 million in housing assets—roughly the size of Atlanta's Public Housing Authority.

# Aaron Burrell Leads on ABA Commission



## Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession

opportunities at all levels of responsibility for diverse attorneys.” To achieve this goal, the Commission annually administers the ABA Model Diversity Survey, which is widely used in the industry to standardize diversity and inclusion metrics. An early adopter of Resolution 113, Dickinson Wright has participated in the Model Diversity Survey each year since its inception and utilizes the survey results to monitor diversity gains and celebrate inclusive excellence with our clients.

Detroit Member Aaron Burrell continues to serve as a member of the American Bar Association’s Commission on Racial & Ethnic Diversity in the Profession, a position he has held since 2021. The Commission serves as a catalyst for promoting diversity and inclusion within the legal profession by facilitating research and developing programs aimed at increasing the entry, participation, and retention of diverse lawyers. Notably, the Commission drafted Resolution 113 in 2016, which “urges all providers of legal services, including law firms and corporations, to expand and create



# Firmwide Awards and Recognition



Corp!





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